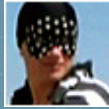




VISTA Campus is Here!
Start Exploring Today!



AmeriCorps Week
Video Contest Lets VISTA
Shine a Light on Poverty

VISTA Viewfinder
Issue 7: July 22, 2008

VISTA: Volunteers In Service To America
Since 1964, 175,000 Strong



VISTA
viewfinder



1 VISTA
since 1964



2 Volunteers
in Service



3 175,000
Strong



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SNAPSHOTS

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Introducing... VISTA Campus

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THE LANDSCAPE



VISTA Campus
now launched!

My AmeriCorps Portal:
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VISTAs in Cedar Rapids Flood Relief:
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Find VISTA on Facebook!
Search for the exact phrase "Volunteers In Service To America (VISTA)," and VISTA's page appears first.
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Join AmeriCorps Alums—for current VISTAs too!
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VISTA Member Handbook:
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FAQ

[Click for Frequently Asked Questions](#)



VISTA has cut the virtual ribbon on the VISTA Campus, an online learning environment for the VISTA community. Our aim is to support you in your development throughout and beyond your VISTA service. The Campus includes self-paced tutorials and courses, reference materials, discussion boards, a campus bookstore and more to help improve your skills and connect with other VISTAs.

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To access the site, please go to <http://vistacampus.org> and select the "VISTAs" option. You will need to create an account (it's quick and easy, we promise!) to access the content and discussion boards. Once inside, explore content such as...

- "Building Your Case for Support," a resource designed to help make your case for support to a potential benefactor. Connecting the right pieces of the proverbial donor's puzzle compels people to support your program. *In the VISTA Member Capacity section*
- The OLINC Discussion Board, where you can post entries, such as adding your thoughts to the VISTA Café Question of the Month: "How do you really know when you have helped a person or community out of poverty?" *Accessible from the VISTA Members page*
- "Living on the Living Allowance," a tutorial that provides information and tools for living frugally. It will help you budget and track your expenses, as well as offer tips from current and former VISTAs. *In the VISTA Member Essentials section*

We hope you'll visit the campus with the same curiosity and energy that brought you to community development,

the struggle for social justice and the work of VISTA in the first place.

We welcome your feedback to help us build and improve the space, and sincerely hope the Campus serves you well.

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"Americorps: Meet Poverty"



VISTA Ashley Andersen fights "Poverty" on and off screen.

He leans in, nose-to-nose with a little girl, and whispers. Threatening. Insisting. All trim and proper, yet full of shadow. Cut to an aerial shot of the city: "Poverty has once again struck the city," says the newscaster. "City officials are asking for help from superhero AmeriCorps."

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Ashley Andersen's "[Will You Join the Fight?](#)" video placed second in this year's AmeriCorps Week Video Contest. She is in her tenth month of VISTA service at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Utah. Along with her brother, Nathan, Ashley began brainstorming ideas for a video.

"We decided it needed to be really unique and different from all the other videos," she said. "We didn't want to just create a montage of pictures with some music in the background. We really wanted to show the passion of what VISTA volunteers do."

They reasoned that poverty is a villain, much like the Joker in Batman—and that poverty affects people of all backgrounds. Hence, the concept of AmeriCorps as a superhero fighting Poverty was created.

Including a few days pre- and post-production and a single

day of filming, the video took about five or six days to complete. Nathan wrote the script and worked behind the scenes, while Ashley played AmeriCorps. Nathan's friend, James, played Poverty. The team recruited the child and newscaster voice from Craigslist ads.

"It was really funny when Poverty yelled his name under the street lamps," said Ashley, describing one of her favorite parts of the video. "Everyone standing around was pretty stunned, but Poverty was so in character he didn't even notice anyone around him."

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Midwest Storm Update: Kansas Tornado Recovery

Kansas Campus Compact's VISTA, Kim Frazier, in Manhattan, Kan., was working while the rest of the University's offices were closed the day after the June 11 tornado caused millions of dollars in damage to the city and campus.



Photo by Steve Godecke. Volunteers pull books from the collapsed library at Chapman's elementary and middle schools on June 25.

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The K-State Volunteer Center of Manhattan mobilized to help the Red Cross. Kim and incoming VISTA Julie Stithem (July PSO) answered questions from the public and referred offers of help while regular Red Cross staff was in the field assessing damage and offering assistance to survivors and volunteers.

The Volunteer Center's work led to a request for assistance in Chapman, a neighboring town, which had been devastated by another tornado in the same storms. The VISTAs and the Center's director were sent to coordinate relief efforts. They also facilitated contact

between responding agencies and Kansas Campus Compact's VISTA Leader, Steve Godecke.

Steve, working with the Great Plains Academy and United Methodists in Disaster Response, arranged for KSCC VISTAs to serve in Chapman on a rotating basis. VISTAs will track and coordinate volunteer activities. VISTA Margaret Howards has been working in Chapman from June 22-29, and will be relieved by a fellow VISTA soon.

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Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: What is the Viewfinder?

A: VISTA means view-looking out on a broad expanse. The viewfinder, a toy that all generations of VISTAs recognize, was a kind of binocular that focused on points of interest, highlights, and snapshots in living color. The VISTA Viewfinder surveys in the landscape and zeroes in on service.

Q. Why the Viewfinder?

A. Here's your direct link to connecting with other VISTAs, learning what they are doing, and helping to spread the message of VISTA and national service!

Q. How can I contribute?

A. Have a story to tell? Submission ideas? Contact vistaoutreach@cns.gov. Use the Viewfinder to highlight your VISTA service and share your experiences with others across the country!

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